TEXTS FOR STUDENTS, No. 9

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THE INSCRIPTION

ON THE

STELE OF MÉŠAʿ

COMMONLY CALLED

THE MOABITE STONE

THE TEXT IN MOABITE AND HEBREW, WITH TRANSLATION

BY

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PREFACE

The text adopted in this edition is that of the late Dr. Driver's Hebrew transcription in the Appendix to the Introduction of his *Notes on the Hebrew Text . . . of the Books of Samuel*, 2nd edition, 1913, by the kind permission of the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, Oxford.

The Moabite (Phœnician) re-transcription has been made from the above-mentioned text. This feature of the present edition—new in such works—may, it is hoped, be of use to persons beginning the study of Semitic palaeography. It should be noted that the type used represents a more or less standardized Phœnician script, and is not a facsimile of that of the Inscription, several letters of which (*e.g.* y, k, q, s, t) represent a more ancient fashion of writing.

I wish to acknowledge indebtedness to Dr. Driver's translation and commentary, Dr. W. H. Bennett's *The Moabite Stone* (1911), and the *Tafel* in Smend and Socin: *Die Inschrift des Königs Mêša von Moab* (1886).

H. F. B. C.

Jan. 22, 1919.

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INTRODUCTION

The Inscription here set forth is accepted, with practical unanimity on the part of experts, as authentic. It was chiselled on a monument of basalt, by order of the Mêša', King of Moab, who is mentioned in 2 Kings iii. 4, and who here recounts his victories over Israel, to whom Moab had long been subject. The date must be somewhere about mid-ninth century B.C., the era of Omri and Ahab, Elijah and Elisha, and Jehu. Line 7 may allude to the overthrow of Omri's dynasty by Jehu, *circa* 843 B.C.

The interest of this famous monument is manifold.

(*a*) To the student of palæography it offers a good specimen of Phœnician script, parent of Alphabets, used not only by Moab but by Israel (as shown *e.g.* by the Siloam Inscription, eighth century B.C.); the older portions of the Old Testament were, in all probability, written in this script.

(*b*) The linguist can here study the essential features of the Grammar and Syntax, along with a useful vocabulary, of the Moabite language, separated from Hebrew by merely dialectical differences. A Hebrew student will find the inscription very like historical narrative in the Old Testament.

(*c*) The historian finds in the Inscription a valuable contribution to the little-known story of a people long extinct.

(*d*) The theologian sees evidence confirming what modern Biblical study has revealed as to Semitic religion. For there are, *e.g.* references to Kᵉmôš, the god of Moab, and to Yahweh God of Israel, and His shrine at Nebo, with allusions to the treatment of con-

quered cities "devoted," *i.e.* put under the ban (*ḥérem*), to the national god.

The stele, or rather the upper portion of the original monument, measuring 3½ feet in height, 2 feet in width, and 2 feet in thickness, was discovered in 1868 by the Rev. F. A. Klein, of the Church Missionary Society, on the site of the ancient Moabite city of Dibon. Its existence was known, from the report of natives, shortly previous to this event, to Monsieur Clermont-Ganneau, the eminent French archæologist. The great interest shown by Europeans, and their offers to purchase, led the Arabs in the neighbourhood to break it up, possibly with the object of selling the fragments at fancy prices. Fire was kindled beneath the stone, cold water dashed on the top of it, and the priceless monument was soon cracked in pieces. Happily, before this stupid act of vandalism was perpetrated, rubbings of the inscription had been secured. Later on most of the fragments were recovered, the missing portions restored with the help of the rubbings, and the Stele of Mêšaʿ now stands in the Louvre. There is a facsimile in the British Museum.

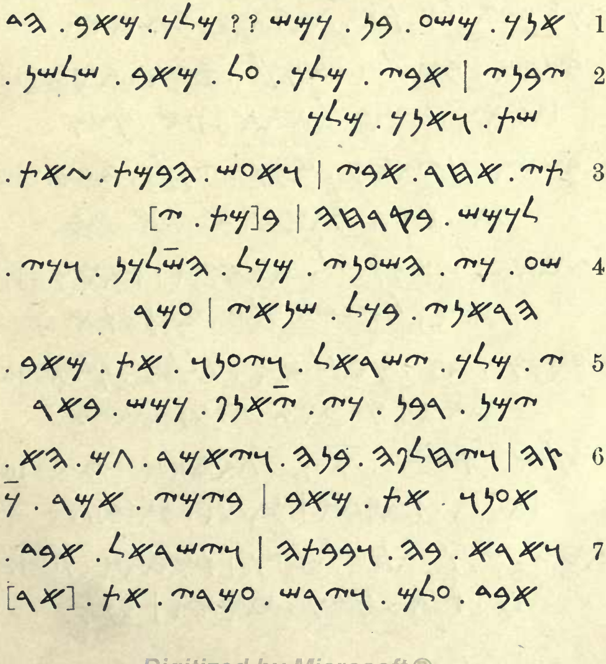
The Inscription may be studied more fully with the aid of the works mentioned in the Preface to the present edition and other works named in their bibliographies, or in the various Dictionaries of the Bible.

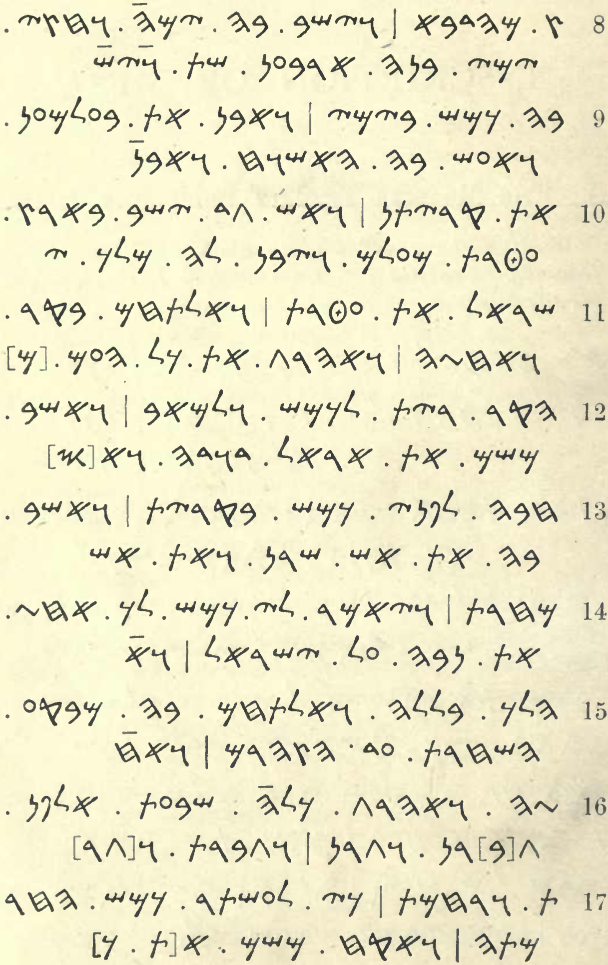
Students offering the subject for examination should practise transcription in Phœnician and Hebrew, and should add vowel-points to the latter. This would prove a useful exercise. After the revision of his vocalization the student should, with a fine pen, point the Hebrew text on pp. 11–13, adding in the margin, or on an inserted fly-leaf, any various readings or alternative pointings.

INSCRIPTION OF MÉŠAʿ

I. The Moabite Text in Phœnician script.

Words and letters within square brackets are restored conjecturally. Overlined letters are more or less uncertain of identification.





18 𐤋𐤉 . 𐤉𐤄𐤅𐤄 . 𐤅𐤀𐤎𐤇𐤁 . 𐤄𐤌 . 𐤋𐤐𐤍𐤉 .
𐤊𐤌𐤔 | 𐤅𐤌𐤋𐤊 . 𐤉𐤔𐤓𐤀𐤋 . 𐤁𐤍𐤄 . 𐤀𐤕

19 𐤉𐤄𐤑 . 𐤅𐤉𐤔𐤁 . 𐤁𐤄 . 𐤁𐤄𐤋𐤕𐤇𐤌𐤄 . 𐤁𐤉 |
𐤅𐤉𐤂𐤓𐤔𐤄 . 𐤊𐤌𐤔 . 𐤌𐤐𐤍[𐤉 𐤅]

20 𐤀𐤒𐤇 . 𐤌𐤌𐤀𐤁 . 𐤌𐤀𐤕𐤍 . 𐤀𐤔 . 𐤊𐤋 . 𐤓𐤔𐤄 |
𐤅𐤀𐤔𐤀𐤄 . 𐤁𐤉𐤄𐤑 . 𐤅𐤀𐤇𐤆𐤄 .

21 𐤋𐤎𐤐𐤕 . 𐤏𐤋 . 𐤃𐤉𐤁𐤍 | 𐤀𐤍𐤊 . 𐤁𐤍𐤕𐤉 . 𐤒𐤓𐤇𐤄 .
𐤇𐤌𐤕 . 𐤄𐤉𐤏𐤓𐤍 . 𐤅𐤇𐤌𐤕

22 𐤄𐤏𐤐𐤋 | 𐤅𐤀𐤍𐤊 . 𐤁𐤍𐤕𐤉 . 𐤔𐤏𐤓𐤉𐤄 . 𐤅𐤀𐤍𐤊 .
𐤁𐤍𐤕𐤉 . 𐤌𐤂𐤃𐤋𐤕𐤄 | 𐤅𐤀

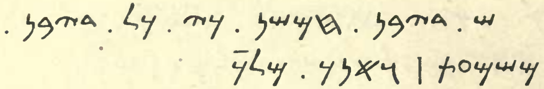
23 𐤍𐤊 . 𐤁𐤍𐤕𐤉 . 𐤁𐤕 . 𐤌𐤋𐤊 . 𐤅𐤀𐤍𐤊 . 𐤏𐤔𐤕𐤉 .
𐤊𐤋𐤀𐤉 . 𐤄𐤀𐤔[𐤅𐤇 . 𐤋𐤌]𐤉𐤍 . 𐤁𐤒𐤓𐤁

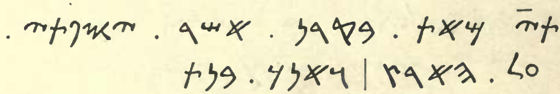
24 𐤄𐤒𐤓 | 𐤅𐤁𐤓 . 𐤀𐤍 . 𐤁𐤒𐤓𐤁 . 𐤄𐤒𐤓 . 𐤁𐤒𐤓
𐤇𐤄 . 𐤅𐤀𐤌𐤓 . 𐤋𐤊𐤋 . 𐤄𐤏𐤌 . 𐤏𐤔𐤅 . 𐤋

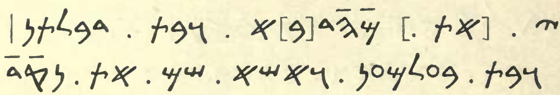
25 𐤊𐤌 . 𐤀𐤔 . 𐤁𐤓 . 𐤁𐤁𐤉𐤕𐤄 | 𐤅𐤀𐤍𐤊 . 𐤊𐤓𐤕𐤉 .
𐤄𐤌𐤊𐤓𐤕𐤕 . 𐤋𐤒𐤓𐤇𐤄 . 𐤁𐤀𐤎𐤓

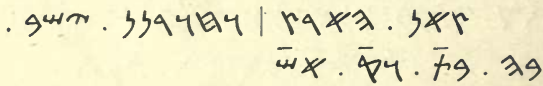
26 [𐤉] . 𐤉𐤔𐤓𐤀𐤋 | 𐤀𐤍𐤊 . 𐤁𐤍𐤕𐤉 . 𐤏𐤓𐤏𐤓 .
𐤅𐤀𐤍𐤊 . 𐤏𐤔𐤕𐤉 . 𐤄𐤌𐤎𐤋𐤕 . 𐤁𐤀𐤓𐤍𐤍 .

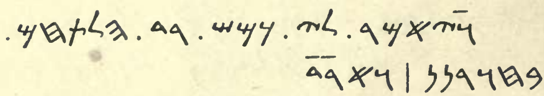
27 𐤀𐤍𐤊 . 𐤁𐤍𐤕𐤉 . 𐤁𐤕 . 𐤁𐤌𐤕 . 𐤊𐤉 . 𐤄𐤓𐤎 .
𐤄𐤀 | 𐤀𐤍𐤊 . 𐤁𐤍𐤕𐤉 . 𐤁𐤑𐤓 . 𐤊𐤉 . 𐤏𐤉𐤍 .

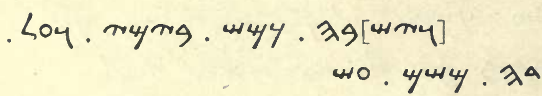
 28

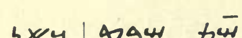
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II. The Text in Hebrew square script.

Words and letters within square brackets are restored conjecturally. Overlined letters are more or less uncertain of identification.

1 אנך · משע · בן · כמש · ? ? מלך · מאב · הד

2 יבני | אבי · מלך · על · מאב · שלשן · שת · ואנך · מלכ

3 תי · אחר · אבי | ואעש · הבמת · זאת · לכמש ·
בקרחה | ב[מת · י]

4 שע · כי · השעני · מכל · *השלכן · וכי · הראני · בכל ·
שנאי | עמר

5 י · מלך · ישראל · ויענו · את · מאב · ימן · רבן · כי ·
יאנף · כמש · באר

6 צה | ויחלפה · בנה · ויאמר · גם · הא · אענו · את ·
מאב | בימי · אמר · כ

7 וארא · בה · ובבתה | וישראל · אבד · אבד · עלם ·
וירש · עמרי · את · [אר]

8 ץ · מהדבא | וישב · בה · ימה · וחצי · ימי · בנה ·
ארבען · שת · ויש

9 בה · כמש · בימי | ואבן · את · בעלמען · ואעש · בה ·
האשוח · ואבן

* The ח in Driver's text is obviously a misprint for ה. See translation. The Moabite is clearly .

10 את · קריתן | ואש · גד · ישב · בארץ · עטרת · מעלם ·
ויבן : לה · מלך · י

11 שראל · את · עטרת | ואלתחם · בקר · ואחזה |
ואהרג · את · כל · העם · [מ]

12 הקר · רית · לכמש · ולמאב | ואשב · משם · את ·
אראל · דודה · וא[ס]

13 חבה · לפני · כמש · בקרית | ואשב · בה · את · אש ·
שרן · ואת · אש

14 מחרת | ויאמר · לי · כמש · לך · אחז · את · נבה ·
על · ישראל | וא

15 הלך · בללה · ואלתחם · בה · מבקע · השחרת · עד ·
הצהרם | ואח

16 זה · ואהרג · כלה · שבעת · אלפן · ג[ב]רן · וגרן |
וגברת · ו[גר]

17 ת · ורחמת | כי · לעשתר · כמש · החרמתה | ואקח ·
משם · א[ת · כ]

18 לי · יהוה · ואסחב · הם · לפני · כמש | ומלך · ישראל ·
בנה · את

19 יהץ · וישב · בה · בהלתחמה · בי | ויגרשה · כמש ·
מפנ[י ו]

20 אקח · ממאב · מאתן · אש · כל · רשה | ואשאה ·
ביהץ · ואחזה ·

21 לספת · על · דיבן | אנך · בנתי · קרחה · חמת ·
היערן · וחמת

22 העפל | ואנך · בנתי · שעריה · ואנך · בנתי ·
מגדלתה | וא

23 נך · בנתי · בת · מלך · ואנך · עשתי · כלאי · האש
[וח · למ]ין · בקרב

24 הקר | וכר · אן · בקרב · הקר · בקרחה · ואמר · לכל ·
העם · עשו · ל

25 כם · אש · בר · בביתה | ואנך · כרתי · המכרתת ·
לקרחה · באסר

26 [י] · ישראל | אנך · בנתי · ערער · ואנך · עשתי ·
המסלת · בארנן ·

27 אנך · בנתי · בת · במת · כי · הרס · הא | אנך · בנתי ·
בצר · כי · עין ·

28 ש · דיבן · חמשן · כי · כל · דיבן · משמעת |
ואנך · מלכ

29 תי · מאת · בקרן · אשר · יספתי · על · הארץ | ואנך ·
בנת

30 י · [את ·] מהד[ב]א · ובת · דבלתן | ובת · בעלמען ·
ואשא · שם · את · נקד

31 צאן · הארץ | וחורנן · ישב · בה · בת · וק · אש

32 ויאמר · לי · כמש · רד · הלתחם · בחורנן | וארד

33 [ויש]בה · כמש · בימי · ועל · דה · משם · עש

34 שת · שדק · ואנ

III. TRANSLATION.

Words in italics are required by English idiom: they are not in the original. The transliteration of proper names is in accordance with the notation in the Hebrew Grammar of Gesenius. Words and letters within square brackets are restored conjecturally. Words within curved brackets are alternative renderings, &c.

1 I *am* Mêšaʿ son of K^{e}môš ? king of Mō'āḇ the Da-

2 -ibonite. My father reigned over Mō'āḇ thirty years and I reign-

3 -ed after my father. And I made this high place for K^{e}môš in Ḳrḥh.* [High place of sal-]

4 -vation, for he had saved me from all the assailants (?), and because he had caused me to look upon † all my foes. ʿOmr-

5 -î *was* king of Yisrā'ēl, and he afflicted Mō'āḇ days many, for K^{e}môš was angry with his la-

6 -nd. And his son succeeded him, and he too said I will afflict Mō'āḇ. In my days he said s[o],

7 and I looked upon † him and upon his house. And Israel utterly perished everlastingly. And ʿOmrî possessed the [la-]

8 -nd of M^{e}hēḏ^{e}ḇā. And (Israel) dwelt therein, his days and half the days of his son, forty years; and

9 K^{e}môš restored it in my days. And I built Báʿal-m^{e}ʿôn and I made therein the reservoir (?), and I built

* *line* 3. Perhaps "Ḳ^{e}rēḥah" or "Ḳorḥāh."

† *lines* 4, 7. "Look upon," *i.e.*, with exultation over a fallen foe. Cf. Ps. lix. 10 E.V.

10 Ḳiryāṯēn. Now the men of Gaḏ had dwelt in the land of ʿ^{a}ṭārôṯ from of old; and the king of Yi[srā'ēl (*beginning of line* 11)] built for himself

11 ʿ^{a}ṭārôṯ. And I fought against the city and took it. And I slew all the people [from]

12 the city, a gazing-stock for K^{e}môš and for Mō'āḇ. And I restored (*or* captured) from thence the altar-hearth (?) of Dāwḏôh (*or* its tutelary spirit?), and I drag-

13 -ged it before K^{e}môš in Ḳ^{e}riyyôṯ. And I placed therein the men of Šrn* and the men of

14 Mḥrṯ.† And K^{e}môš said unto me Go, seize N^{e}ḇôh against Yisrā'ēl. And I

15 went by night, and fought against it from dawn unto noon. And I sei-

16 -zed it and slew all of it, 7000 men and men-sojourners ‡ and women & [women-sojourner-] ‡

17 s, and damsels; for to ʿaštar-K^{e}môš had I devoted it. And I took from thence the [ves-]

18 -sels of Yahweh, and dragged them before K^{e}môš. Now the king of Yisrā'ēl had built

19 Yáhaṣ, and dwelt therein while he fought against me. And K^{e}môš drove him away from before me, and

20 I took from Mō'āḇ 200 men, all the head-men thereof; and I brought them up against Yáhaṣ, and seized it

21 to add unto Daiḇôn. I built Ḳrḥh,§ the wall of Y^{e}ʿārîn (*or* the woods), and the wall of

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* *line* 13. Šārōn (?)

† *line* 14. Maḥarāṯ (?)

‡ *line* 16. *I.e.*, recognised settlers. Cf. 2 Sam. i. 13.

§ *line* 21. See note, *line* 3.

22 ʿōp̄el (*or* the Acropolis). And I built the gates thereof, and I built the towers thereof. And

23 I built the king's house, and I made the two reser-[voirs? for wa]ter in the middle of

24 the city. Now cistern there was none in the middle of the city, in Ḳrḥh.* And I said to all the people, Make to

25 you every man a cistern in his house. And I cut out the cutting for Ḳrḥh * by means of the prisoner-

26 [-s *captured from*] Yisrā'ēl. I built ʿ^{a}rōʿēr and I made the high-road by the Arnon.

27 I built Bēṯ-bāmôṯ for it was destroyed. I built Béṣer for ruins

28 [had it become. And the head-me]n of Daiḇôn were 50, for all Daiḇôn was loyal. And I reign-

29 -ed [over] 100 in the cities which I added to the land. And I buil-

30 -t M^{e}hēḏ^{e}[ḇ]ā and Beṯ-diḇlāṯēn, and Beṯ-báʿal-m^{e}ʿôn; and I brought thither the sheep-masters (?) †

31 . . . . sheep of the land. And Ḥôrōnēn, there dwelt therein ? ?

32 . . . . [And] K^{e}môš said unto me, Go down, fight against Ḥôrōnēn. And I went down

33 . . . . . and K^{e}môš [resto]red it in my days. And . . . . . . from thence

34 . . . . And I . . . . . .

* *lines* 24, 25. See note, *line* 3. † *line* 30. See 2 Kings iii. 4.